

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re the Application of:

Christopher R. Gentle

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For: "PASSIVE LOOK AHEAD FOR USER  
INTERFACES"

) Group Art Unit: 2179

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

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September 9, 2008

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BY:

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Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents  
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**APPELLANT'S BRIEF ON APPEAL (37 CFR § 41.31)**

Dear Sir:

This is an appeal under 37 CFR § 41.31 to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences of the United States Patent and Trademark Office from the final rejection of Claims 1-7, 9-23 and 25-35 of the above-identified patent application. These claims were indicated as finally rejected in a final Office Action dated April 14, 2008, and the Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review dated August 8, 2008, indicated that these Claims remained rejected. Payment in the amount of \$510 for the fee required under 37 CFR § 41.20(b)(2) is being submitted herewith via EFS-Web. Although Appellants believe this fee amount is correct and that no other fees are required to be paid, please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-1970.

The structure of the Brief is as follows in accordance with 37 CFR §41.37(c):

- I. Real Party in Interest
- II. Related Appeals and Interferences
- III. Status of Claims
- IV. Status of Amendments
- V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

- VI. Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal
- VII. Argument
- VIII. Claims Appendix
- IX. Evidence Appendix- None
- X. Related Proceedings Appendix- None

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

Avaya Inc. is the owner of the patent application and the real party in interest.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other prior or pending appeals, interferences or judicial proceedings related to this patent application.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

The status of the claims is as follows:

1. Claims canceled: 8 and 24.
2. Claims withdrawn from consideration but not cancelled: None.
3. Claims pending: 1-7, 9-23 and 25-35.
4. Claims allowed: None.
5. Claims rejected: 1-7, 9-23 and 25-35.
6. Claims objected to: None.
7. Claims appealed: 1-7, 9-23 and 25-35.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An Amendment and Response that was filed on January 9, 2008 has been entered. A Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review was mailed on August 8, 2008, indicating that there is at least one actual issue for appeal, and requiring the filing of an Appeal Brief within two-months of the filing date of the Notice of Appeal. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §41.37(c)(2), this brief does not include any new or non-admitted amendment.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(v))

The claimed invention is generally directed to providing a preview of the consequence of

making a user selected action, without requiring the actual selection of that action. More particularly, the claimed invention provides a preview of what would occur if the user actually made a particular selection. The presentation of the preview is triggered by the user allowing a cursor to hover over a selectable item. For example, if the user hovers over a menu item, a dialogue or sub-window that would be activated is displayed to the user. The user is thus given an immediate and easily comprehensible depiction of the consequence of actually selecting that item.

The invention may be implemented in connection with a general purpose computer 100 operable to run application programs. (Specification, p. 4, ll. 4-16.) An output device 124, such as a device capable of displaying images is provided in connection with the computer 100. (Specification, p. 4, ll. 20-23.) Input devices such as a keyboard and pointing device are provided for receiving user input. (Specification, p. 5, ll. 1-4.)

Application programming 112 running on the computer 100 generally provides a desired functionality, such as a word processing, spreadsheet, accounting, utility, communication or game program. (Specification, p. 6, ll. 1-4.) The application programming 112 may provide information to and receive information from a user through a graphical user interface. (Specification, p. 6, ll. 6-8.) The visual display generated in connection with the operation of the application programming 112 may include various graphical elements, such as various selectable items, including menu items, buttons, radio buttons, drop down lists, icons, hyperlinks or any other graphical or textual item that is presented to a user and that can be selected and/or manipulated by the user, for example using a cursor controlled by a pointing device. (Specification, p. 6, ll. 8-14.)

In operation, the look ahead feature provided by the claimed invention can be activated by a user, can be turned on by default when an application 112 is run, or can always be active. (Specification, p. 6, ll. 18-21.) The operation of the look ahead feature includes determining the position of the cursor controlled by the user in the application window or sub-window, including determining whether the cursor is over a selectable item (*e.g.*, a menu item or button, etc.). (Specification, p. 6, ll. 21-23.) If a selectable item is in fact selected, for example if the user clicks on a mouse button while the cursor is positioned over the item being selected, that item is actually selected, and the associated action is executed normally. (Specification, p. 7, ll. 1-7.)

If the selectable item is not actually selected, a determination is made as to whether the cursor is hovering over the selectable item. (Specification, p. 7, ll. 8-9.) For instance, a cursor is “hovering” when it remains within an area coincident with the selectable item for some

predetermined period of time. (Specification, p. 7, ll. 9-17.) If the cursor is determined to be hovering over a selectable item, a visual representation of the consequences of actually selecting the selectable item is displayed. (Specification, p. 7, ll. 18-19.) This visual representation may include a depiction of the sub-menu, window, dialogue or other consequence of selecting a particular item. (Specification, p. 7, ll. 19-21.) Moreover, the display providing the visual representation of the consequence of an actual selection of the selectable item may be in the form of an overlay transparency, a stencil outline, or some other distinguishing characteristic, in order to provide the user with an indication that the visual representation is a preview provided by the look ahead feature, and has not resulted from any actual selection of a selectable item. (Specification, p. 7, ln. 21 to p. 8, ln. 9.) In accordance with other embodiments of the claimed invention, the user can move through selectable items and invoke the look-ahead feature by using keyboard commands. (Specification, p. 8, ln. 21 to p. 9, ln. 8.)

As a particular example, Fig. 3 of the original application is a screen shot that illustrates the operation of the look-ahead feature of the claimed invention. (Specification, p. 10, ll. 1-3; Fig. 3.) In particular, the application being executed by or on the computer 100 is contained within a first window 304. (Specification, p. 10, ll. 3-9.) As can be seen from the figure, the cursor 312 is hovering over the menu item “properties” 316 that is displayed within the first window 304 by the application. (Specification, p. 10, ll. 12-21.) The consequences of selecting the properties menu item 316 are displayed in the dialogue 308 that in the example of Fig. 3 is shown as a transparent overlay. (Specification, p. 10, ll. 9-11.) A visual indication of the relationship between the selectable item (here the properties menu item 316) and the depiction of a consequence of selecting that item (here the dialogue 308, presenting various data fields and selections that can be manipulated by the user) may be displayed, such as in the form of projection lines in order to emphasize the connection between the selectable item and the depiction of the results of selecting that item. (Specification, p. 10, ln. 21 to p. 11, ln. 2.)

By providing a visual representation of the results of a selection, those results can be accurately and quickly communicated to the user. (Specification, p. 9, ll. 19-20.) In particular, the user is not required to read and comprehend a textual description of the results of an action. (Specification, p. 9, ll. 20-21.) Instead, the user is shown the actual results or a depiction of the results that would be obtained if the selection were actually made. (Specification, p. 9, ll. 22-23.)

Independent Claim 1 is generally directed to a method for providing a visual representation of the consequences of taking an action. The method includes:

first moving a cursor in response to input from a user (Specification, p. 5, ll. 1-4; p. 6, ll. 21-22; p. 13, ln. 3);

first detecting a position of said cursor within an application window  
(Specification, p. 6, ll. 21-22; p. 13, ln. 4);

in response to said position of said cursor corresponding to a first selectable item within said application window, displaying a depiction of a consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item (Specification, p. 6, ll. 22-23; p. 7, ll. 8-19; p. 13, ll. 5-7), wherein said first selectable item is not a representation of a file (Specification, p. 3, ll. 11-13; p. 7, ll. 19-21), wherein said displaying a depiction of a consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item includes displaying a preview of an actual consequence of selecting said first selectable item (Specification, p. 2, ll. 21-22; p. 3, ll. 1-13; p. 7, ll. 18-21; p. 9, ll. 19-23; p. 10, ll. 1-3 and 0-21), wherein said actual consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item includes an operation that is performed on a file that is open in a computer program presenting said first selectable item (Specification, p. 3, ll. 4-16; p. 6, ll. 1-16; p. 7, ll. 1-7; p. 9, ll. 9-23; p. 10, ll. 9-21; Fig. 3), and wherein said displaying a depiction as performed in the absence of an actual selection of said first selectable item (Specification, p. 2, ln. 22 to p. 3, ln. 3; p. 7, ll. 8-19; p. 9, ll. 9-18; p. 10, ln. 12 to p. 11, ln. 2).

Independent Claim 17 is generally directed to a computer implemented method. The method includes:

determining a position of a cursor (Specification, p. 6, ll. 8-14 and 21-22); and  
in response to said position of said cursor hovering over a selectable item, displaying a preview of an actual consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item (Specification, p. 3, ll. 1-3; p. 6, ll. 22-23; p. 7, ln. 8 to p. 8, ln. 9; p. 8, ln. 21 to p. 9, ln. 8; p. 10, ln. 12 to p. 11, ln. 2), wherein an actual selection of said first selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open within an application that provides said first selectable item (Specification, p. 3, ll. 4-16; p. 6, ll. 1-16; p. 7, ll. 1-7; p. 9, ll. 9-23).

Independent Claim 31 is generally directed to an apparatus for displaying a consequence of a selection to a user. The apparatus includes:

Means for visually displaying. The means for visually displaying are provided by an output device 124 (Specification, p. 4, ll. 20-23).

Means for receiving user input. The means for receiving user input are provided by one or more input devices 128 (Specification, p. 5, ll. 1-4).

Means for determining a position of a cursor, wherein said cursor is displayed by said means for visually displaying and is responsive to said means for receiving user input. The means for determining a position of a cursor are provided by application programming 112 running in connection with operating system instructions 108 on a processor 116 of a computer 100 (Specification, p. 4, ll. 13-16; p. 6, ll. 6-16).

Means for determining a relationship between a position of a selectable item displayed by said means for visually displaying said cursor. The means for determining a relationship are provided by the application programming 112 (Specification, p. 6, ll. 1-16).

Means for generating a depiction of an actual consequence of actually selecting said selectable item at least when said cursor is within an area occupied by said selectable item on said means for visually displaying, wherein said selectable item is associated with an application program, wherein said actual consequence of selecting said selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open in the application program, and wherein said operation does not include opening a file. The means for generating a depiction are provided by the application program 112 (Specification, p. 2, ln. 21 to p. 3, ln. 16; p. 6, ll. 1-16; p. 7, ln. 8 to p. 8, ln. 9; p. 8, ln. 21 to p. 9, ln. 23; p. 11, ll. 3-10).

Independent Claim 34 is generally directed to an apparatus for providing a depiction of the consequences of making a selection. The apparatus includes:

data storage 104, wherein at least a first application 112 is maintained in said data storage 104 (Specification, p. 4, ll. 7-12; p. 6, ll. 1-16);

a data processor 116, operable to execute instructions included in said first application 112 (Specification, p. 4, ll. 13-16);

a visual display 124 operable to display graphical elements generated in connection with said execution of said instructions included in said first application 112 and operable to display a cursor (Specification, p. 4, ll. 20-23; p. 6, ll. 1-16);

a pointing device 128 operable to receive commands from a user concerning a position of said cursor with respect to said graphical elements, wherein a depiction of the actual consequences of actually selecting at least a first selectable item provided as part of an application 112 and included in said graphical elements is displayed in response to detecting that said cursor is hovering over said at least a first selectable item, and wherein said actual

consequences of selection said at least a first selectable item include an operation that is performed on a file that is open in said application 112 and do not include opening any file (Specification, p. 5, ll. 1-4; p. 6, ll. 1-16; p. 7, ln. 8; p. 8, ln. 9; p. 8, ln. 21 to p. 9, ln. 18; p. 10, ln. 6 to p. 11, ln. 21).

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL (37 CFR §41.37(c)(1)(vi))

A. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 OF CLAIMS 1-7, 9-23 AND 25-35

1. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 of Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17-23 and 25-35 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,101 to Clark et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0205514 to Sommerer et al.

2. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 of Claim 16 as being unpatentable over Clark in view of Sommerer and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,160,554 to Krause.

VII. ARGUMENT

A. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

The pending claims have been finally rejected as being unpatentable over various references. 35 U.S.C. §103 provides in relevant part:

“A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in §102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented in the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.”

“A prima facie case of obviousness is established [by an Examiner] when the teachings from the prior art itself would appear to have suggested the claimed subjected matter to a person of ordinary skill in the art.” (*In re Rijckaert*, 28 USPQ2d (BNA) 1955, 1956 (quoting *In re Bell*, 26 USPQ2d (BNA) 1529, 1531 (Fed. Cir. 1993)). In determining the propriety of the Patent

Office case for obviousness in the first instance, it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the reference teachings would appear to be sufficient for one of ordinary skill in the art having the reference before him to make the proposed substitution, combination or other modification. (MPEP §2143.01, quoting *In re Linter*, 458 F. 2d 1013, 1016 (CCPA 1972)). “[R]jections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusions of obviousness.” *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. \_\_\_\_\_, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007).

1. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 OF CLAIMS 1-7, 9-15, 17-23 AND 25-35

Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17-23 and 25-35 stand rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,101 to Clark et al. (“Clark”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0205514 to Sommerer et al. (“Sommerer”).

a) The Claimed Invention

As discussed in detail above, the claimed invention is generally directed to providing a visual representation of the consequences of taking an action in connection with an application program. In particular, a depiction or preview of the actual consequence that actually selecting a selectable item presented by a program or application will have is provided. Moreover, as specified in the claims, the preview is directed to the actual consequence of making a selection that results in an operation being performed on a file that is open in a computer program (*i.e.*, the computer application) presenting the first selectable item, in the absence of an actual selection of the first selectable item.

b) The Clark Reference

The Clark reference is generally directed to a multilevel tool tip. In particular, when a user points to an area of interest in a graphical display on a computer monitor using a cursor, a first level of information is displayed. (Clark, col. 1, ll. 45-48.) A subsequent level of information is then displayed if the user continues to point to that area of interest or if a selected keystroke is entered. (Clark, col. 1, ll. 50-53.) Higher level tool tips may also be displayed. (Clark, col. 1, ll. 59-61.) According to Clark, a tool tip is a textual description of the program



function associated with the icon that the cursor is over. (Clark, col. 2, ll. 40-63.) Tool tips according to Clark may also include a graphical image or a multimedia clip demonstrating the icon's function in detail. (Clark, col. 2, ll. 56-60.) However, Clark does not teach, suggest or describe providing a preview of the actual consequence of selecting an item. The failure of Clark to provide a preview of a consequence of selecting a selectable item as claimed is acknowledged by the Examiner. (See final Office Action dated April 14, 2008, pages 3 and 14.)

c) The Sommerer Reference

The Sommerer reference is generally directed to a hyperlink preview utility and method. In particular, Sommerer discusses displaying a preview of a target resource page associated with a linking control, such as a hyperlink. (Sommerer, paragraph 8.) According to Sommerer, the preview is displayed adjacent to the linking control, and may display layout and content information to a user. (id.) The preview can also be displayed in a scaled down browser window and is fully functional. (Sommerer, paragraph 28.) The preview is a live retrieval of the previewed resource page, or a static thumbnail image of the resource page. (id.) Providing the preview of the linked resource page includes a retrieval of the resource page from the network or from archive storage. (Sommerer, paragraph 31.) Previewing a target resource page is not a disclosure of previewing the actual consequence of an operation on a file that is open in a computer program presenting a selectable item. Accordingly, there is no teaching, suggestion or disclosure in Sommerer to provide a preview of an actual consequence of selecting a selectable item that includes an operation performed on a file that is open in the application as generally claimed.

d) The Proposed Combination of References Does Not Provide All of the Elements of the Claims

The final rejection of the claims by the Examiner states that it would have been obvious to modify the tool tip of Clark to incorporate the hyperlink preview feature of Sommerer. However, the proposed combination of references would not in fact provide each and every element of the pending claims. In particular, such a combination does not provide a disclosure of previewing the results of an operation performed on a file. In particular, the tool tip of Clark is not in fact for performing an operation on a file. Instead, the tool tip of Clark simply discusses the effect that making a selection would have in general. In contrast, the claimed invention displays a preview of the actual consequence of actually selecting a selectable item where that

consequence includes an operation performed on a file that is open in a computer program. Moreover, the preview feature discussed by the Sommerer reference also lacks disclosure of previewing an operation that is performed on a file. Instead, Sommerer discusses retrieving a resource page that is pointed to by a link. Therefore, the proposed combination of references does not provide a disclosure of previewing the effect of an operation performed on an open file.

In addition, there is no motivation to combine the Clark and Sommerer references. For instance, it is not obvious to modify the tool tip of Clark in view of the preview of a target resource page of Sommerer to arrive at a disclosure of depicting the actual consequence of actually selecting a first selectable item that performs an operation on an open file in the absence of such an actual selection as generally claimed. For example, doing so consumes processing power. In addition, because the operation that is previewed has not been actually selected, it is not apparent from the cited references that performing that operation in order to provide a preview of its effect would have been obvious. Accordingly, the claims should be allowed for at least the additional reason that the proposed combination of references is improper.

e) Independent Claim 1 and Dependent Claims 2-7 and 9-15 Are Not Obvious

The invention set forth in independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-7 and 9-15 is generally directed to a method for providing a visual representation of the consequences of taking an action. As recited by the claims, the position of a cursor within an application window is detected. In response to the position of the cursor corresponding to a first selectable item within the application window, a depiction of a consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item is displayed. The first selectable item is not a representation of a file. In addition, the actual consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item includes an operation that is performed on a file that is open in a computer program presenting the first selectable item. The depiction of a consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item is displayed in the absence of an actual selection of the first selectable item.

The tool tips discussed by the Clark reference and the preview of a target resource page discussed by the Sommerer reference do not teach, suggest or describe providing a preview of an actual consequence of selecting a first selectable item where the actual consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item includes an operation that is performed on a file that is open in a computer program presenting the first selectable item, and where the first selectable item is not a representation of a file. Instead, the Clark reference provides fixed descriptions or

demonstrations of an icon's function, without operating on an application that is open in the program presenting the icon, and without providing a preview of the actual consequence of selecting the first selectable item. The Sommerer reference discusses opening a target resource page associated with a linking control, without operating on an application that is open in the program presenting the icon. Therefore, even considered in combination, the disclosure of the Clark and Sommerer references does not result in a method that provides a preview of an actual consequence of selecting an item that includes an operation performed on a file that is open in the application and in which the selectable item is not a representation of a file as claimed. Therefore, for at least these reasons, independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-7 and 9-15 are not obvious, and should be allowed.

f) Independent Claim 17 and Dependent Claims 18-23 and 25-30 Are Not Obvious

Independent Claim 17 is generally directed to a computer implemented method that includes determining a position of a cursor. In response to the position of the cursor hovering over a first selectable item, the claim further includes displaying a preview of an actual consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item. The claim further specifies that an actual selection of the first selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open within an application that provides the first selectable item.

As noted above and as admitted in the final Office Action, the Clark reference does not provide a preview of an actual consequence of selecting an item that performs an operation on a file that is open within an application. Contrary to the assertion in the final Office Action, the Sommerer reference also does not teach, suggest or describe such features of the claimed invention. Instead, Sommerer discusses a system in which a target resource page represented by a link can be previewed. Previewing a target resource page is different than performing an operation on a file that is open within an application that provides a first selectable item as claimed. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Claim 17 and dependent Claims 18-23 and 25-30 are not obvious, and should be allowed.

g) Independent Claim 31 and Dependent Claims 32 and 33 Are Not Obvious

Independent Claim 31 is generally directed to an apparatus for displaying a consequence of a selection to a user. The apparatus includes means for generating a depiction of an actual

consequence of actually selecting a selectable item that is associated with an application program, wherein the actual consequence of selecting the selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open in the application program, and wherein the operation does not include opening a file.

The Clark reference is generally cited by the final Office Action for its discussion of demonstrating the function of an icon. However, the final Office Action admits that Clark does not teach displaying a preview of an actual consequence of selecting the selectable item. (Final Office Action dated April 14, 2008, page 3.) The Sommerer reference discusses providing a hyperlink preview. The final Office Action argues that modifying the multilevel tool tip of Clark to include displaying a preview of an actual consequence of selecting a toolbar menu item in view of Sommerer would have been obvious to one of skill in the art. However, even if such a combination is made, the result does not provide a disclosure of performing an operation on a file that is open in the application as claimed. Therefore, independent Claim 31 and dependent Claims 32 and 33 are not obvious, and the rejections of these claims should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

h) Independent Claim 34 and Dependent Claim 35 Are Not Obvious

Independent Claim 34 is generally directed to an apparatus for providing a depiction of the consequences of making a selection. The apparatus includes a data processor operable to execute instructions included in a first application, a visual display operable to display graphical elements generated in connection with the execution of the instructions included in the first application and operable to display a cursor, and a pointing device operable to receive commands from a user concerning the position of the cursor with respect to the graphical elements. According to the claim, a depiction of the actual consequences of actually selecting at least a first selectable item provided as part of an application and included in the graphical elements is displayed in response to detecting that the cursor is hovering over the first selectable item. In addition, the consequences include an operation that is performed on a file that is open in the application and do not include opening a new file.

As noted above, the Clark reference discusses the provision of a multiple level tool tip. However, Clark does not teach, suggest or describe providing a preview of the actual results of a selection of a selectable item, where the consequences of selecting that item include an operation performed on an open file. The Sommerer reference also does not teach, suggest or disclose such a feature. Instead, Sommerer discusses providing a preview of a target page. Therefore,

each and every element of independent Claim 34 and dependent Claim 35 are not taught, suggested or disclosed by the cited references, and these claims should be allowed.


2. THE REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 OF CLAIM 16

Claim 16 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Clark in view of Sommerer and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,160,554 to Krause ("Krause"). The Krause reference is cited for teaching the use of a projection line when a preview window is invoked. However, the Krause reference does not discuss providing a preview of an actual consequence of selecting a first selectable item where the actual consequence of actually selecting the first selectable item includes an operation that is performed on a file that is open in a computer program presenting that item. Accordingly, Claim 16 should be allowed for at least the same reasons that Claim 1 should be allowed.

Based upon the foregoing, Appellant respectfully requests that the Board reverse the Examiner's rejections of pending Claims 1-7, 9-23 and 25-35 and requests that the board pass the above-identified patent application to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 9, 2008

## VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A method for providing a visual representation of the consequences of taking an action, comprising:

first moving a cursor in response to input from a user;

first detecting a position of said cursor within an application window; and

in response to said position of said cursor corresponding to a first selectable item within said application window, displaying a depiction of a consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item, wherein said first selectable item is not a representation of a file, wherein said displaying a depiction of a consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item includes displaying a preview of an actual consequence of selecting said first selectable item, wherein said actual consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item includes an operation that is performed on a file that is open in a computer program presenting said first selectable item, and wherein said displaying a depiction is performed in the absence of an actual selection of said first selectable item.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

second moving a cursor in response to input from a user;

second detecting a position of said cursor; and

in response to said position of said cursor no longer corresponding to said first selectable item within said application window, discontinuing said displaying a depiction of a consequence of selecting said first selectable item.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

second moving a cursor in response to input from said user;

second detecting a position of said cursor within said application window; and

in response to said position of said cursor corresponding to a second selectable item within said application window, displaying a consequence of selecting said second selectable item.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said displaying a depiction of a consequence of selecting said first selectable item comprises displaying a result of selecting said first selectable item in a way that is visually altered as compared to a display in response to an actual selection of said first selectable item.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said displaying comprises displaying as a transparent overlay.
6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said transparent overlay comprises an alpha-blended rendering.
7. The method of Claim 1, wherein said displaying comprises displaying as a stencil outline.
8. (Canceled)
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of displaying is further in response to said cursor remaining within an area corresponding to said selectable item for at least a first period of time.
10. The method of Claim 1, wherein said selectable item comprises at least one of a menu item, an icon, and a button.
11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
detecting a selection of said first selectable item;  
in response to said detecting a selection said first selectable item, displaying a consequence of selecting said first selectable item, wherein an appearance of said depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item is different than an appearance of said consequence of selecting said selectable item.
12. The method of Claim 1, wherein said method is performed with respect to a graphical user interface.
13. The method of Claim 1, wherein said displayed depiction comprises a depiction of at least one of a submenu, or sub-window.
14. The method of Claim 1, further comprising;

after said displaying a depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item, in response to a position of said cursor no longer corresponding to said selectable item, discontinuing said displaying a depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item.

15. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
displaying an indication of a relationship between said selectable item and said depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein said indication of a relationship between said selectable item and said depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item comprises a projection line.

17. A computer implemented method, comprising:  
determining a position of a cursor; and  
in response to said position of said cursor hovering over a first selectable item, displaying a preview of an actual consequence of actually selecting said first selectable item, wherein an actual selection of said first selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open within an application that provides said first selectable item.

18. The method of Claim 17, further comprising:  
second determining a position of said cursor; and  
in response to said cursor no longer hovering over said first selectable item, discontinuing said depicting a consequence of selecting said first selectable item.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein said discontinuing is performed in the absence of a user selection of a second selectable item for discontinuing said depicting a consequence of selecting said first selectable item.

20. The method of Claim 18, further comprising:  
third determining a position of said cursor; and  
in response to said position of said cursor hovering over a second selectable item, depicting a consequence of selecting said second selectable item.



21. The method of Claim 17, wherein said consequence of selecting said first selectable item is displayed as an overlay transparency.
22. The method of Claim 17, wherein said consequence of selecting said first selectable item is displayed as a stencil outline.
23. The method of Claim 17, wherein said depicted consequence of selecting a first selectable item comprises displaying at least one of an inactive submenu, an inactive window, and an inactive dialogue.
24. (Canceled)
25. The method of Claim 17, wherein said consequence of selecting said first selectable item comprises a submenu.
26. The method of Claim 17, wherein said consequence of selecting said first selectable item comprises a subwindow.
27. The method of Claim 17, further comprising:  
in response to a selection of said first selectable item, displaying at least one of an active submenu and an active window.
28. The method of Claim 17, wherein said hovering over a first selectable item comprises said cursor remaining in an area corresponding to said first selectable item for at least a first predetermined period of time.
29. The method of Claim 17, wherein said computational component comprises a computer readable storage medium containing instructions for performing the method.
30. The method of Claim 17, wherein said computational component comprises a logic circuit.
31. An apparatus for displaying a consequence of a selection to a user, comprising:

means for visually displaying;  
means for receiving user input;  
means for determining a position of a cursor, wherein said cursor is displayed by said means for visually displaying and is responsive to said means for receiving user input;  
means for determining a relationship between a position of a selectable item displayed by said means for visually displaying and said cursor; and  
means for generating a depiction of an actual consequence of actually selecting said selectable item at least when said cursor is within an area occupied by said selectable item on said means for visually displaying, wherein said selectable item is associated with an application program, wherein said actual consequence of selecting said selectable item performs an operation on a file that is open in the application program, and wherein said operation does not include opening a file.

32. The apparatus of Claim 31, wherein said depiction of a consequence of selecting said selectable item comprises displaying said consequences as a transparent overlay.

33. The apparatus of Claim 31, wherein said means for receiving user input comprises a pointing device.

34. An apparatus for providing a depiction of the consequences of making a selection, comprising:

data storage, wherein at least a first application is maintained in said data storage;  
a data processor operable to execute instructions included in said first application;  
a visual display operable to display graphical elements generated in connection with said execution of said instructions included in said first application and operable to display a cursor;  
a pointing device operable to receive commands from a user concerning a position of said cursor with respect to said graphical elements, wherein a depiction of the actual consequences of actually selecting at least a first selectable item provided as part of an application and included in said graphical elements is displayed in response to detecting that said cursor is hovering over said at least a first selectable item, and wherein said actual consequences of selection said at least a first selectable item include an operation that is performed on a file that is open in said application and do not include opening any file.

35. The apparatus of Claim 34, wherein said pointing device includes a button for receiving an indication of a user selection, and wherein said depiction of the consequences of selecting a selectable item is displayed in the absence of operation of said button.

## IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

## X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.